

Appl. No. 10/050,511
Amdt. dated July 16, 2003
Reply to Office Action of Apr. 18, 2003

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS

Claim 1 (currently amended) An inflatable curtain for protecting the occupants of an automobile, comprising:
a peripheral region comprising an upper part;
a connector located along the upper part to secure the inflatable curtain to the automobile;
an inflatable portion; and
a first stiffening element positioned along at least a portion of the peripheral region, wherein during deployment of the inflatable curtain the first stiffening element reduces the inflation time of the inflatable portion.

Claim 2 (original) The inflatable curtain of claim 1, wherein the inflatable portion further comprises an inflation inlet for communication with an inflator.

Claim 3 (original) The inflatable curtain of claim 1, wherein the stiffening element is substantially planar.

Claim 4 (original) The inflatable curtain of claim 1, wherein the first stiffening element remains substantially stationary with respect to the length of the inflatable curtain when the inflatable portion is inflated.

Claim 5 (original) The inflatable curtain of claim 1, further comprising a second stiffening element positioned along at least a portion of the peripheral region.

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Claim 6 (original) The inflatable curtain of claim 1, wherein the first stiffening element has a length greater than its width, the inflatable curtain has a length greater than its width, and the length of the first stiffening element is oriented substantially parallel to the length of the inflatable curtain.

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Claim 7 (original) The inflatable curtain of claim 1, wherein the peripheral region comprises an upper part, and the first stiffening element is positioned along the upper part.

Claim 8 (original) The inflatable curtain of claim 1, wherein the stiffening element is formed as an integral portion of the inflatable curtain.

Claim 9 (original) The inflatable curtain of claim 1, wherein the stiffening element is securely fastened to the inflatable curtain.

Claim 10 (original) The inflatable curtain of claim 9, wherein the stiffening element is a plastic stay.

Claim 11 (original) The inflatable curtain of claim 9, wherein the first stiffening element is stitched to the peripheral region.

Claim 12 (original) The inflatable curtain of claim 1, wherein the inflatable curtain is tetherless.

Claim 13 (original) The inflatable curtain of claim 1, further comprising a tether.

Claim 14 (cancelled).

Claim 15 (currently amended) An inflatable curtain for protecting the occupants of an automobile, comprising:

a peripheral region comprising an upper part;
a connector located along the upper part to secure the inflatable curtain to the automobile;
an inflatable portion comprising an inflation inlet for communication with an inflator; and
a first substantially planar stiffening element positioned along at least a portion of the peripheral region, wherein the first stiffening element remains substantially stationary with respect to the length of the inflatable curtain when the inflatable portion is inflated, and wherein during deployment of the inflatable curtain the first stiffening element reduces the inflation time of the inflatable portion.

Claim 16 (original) The inflatable curtain of claim 15, further comprising a second stiffening element positioned along at least a portion of the peripheral region.

Claim 17 (original) The inflatable curtain of claim 15, wherein the first stiffening element has a length greater than its width, the inflatable curtain has a length greater than its width, and the length of the first stiffening element is oriented substantially parallel to the length of the inflatable curtain.

Claim 18 (original) The inflatable curtain of claim 15, wherein the peripheral region comprises an upper part, and the first stiffening element is positioned along the upper part.

Claim 19 (original) The inflatable curtain of claim 15, wherein the stiffening element is formed as an integral portion of the inflatable curtain.

Claim 20 (original) The inflatable curtain of claim 15, wherein the stiffening element is securely fastened to the inflatable curtain.

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Claim 21 (original) The inflatable curtain of claim 15, wherein the stiffening element is a plastic stay.

Claim 22 (original) The inflatable curtain of claim 15, wherein the first stiffening element is stitched to the peripheral region.

Claim 23 (original) The inflatable curtain of claim 15, wherein the inflatable curtain is tetherless.

Claim 24 (original) The inflatable curtain of claim 15, further comprising a tether.

Claim 25 (cancelled).

Claim 26 (original) An inflatable curtain for protecting the occupants of an automobile, the inflatable curtain comprising:

a length and a width, the length being greater than the width;

a peripheral region having an upper part;

an inflatable portion comprising an inflation inlet for communication with an inflator;

a connector located on the upper part to secure the inflatable curtain to the automobile;

and

a first substantially planar stiffening element having a length greater than its width, the first stiffening element being positioned along at least a portion of the upper part, wherein the length of the first stiffening element is oriented substantially parallel to the length of the inflatable curtain, wherein the first stiffening element remains substantially stationary with respect to the length of the inflatable curtain when the inflatable portion is inflated, and wherein the first stiffening element reduces the inflation time of the inflatable portion.

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Claim 27 (original) The inflatable curtain of claim 26, further comprising a second stiffening element positioned along at least a portion of the peripheral region.

Claim 28 (original) The inflatable curtain of claim 26, wherein the stiffening element is formed as an integral portion of the inflatable curtain.

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Claim 29 (original) The inflatable curtain of claim 26, wherein the stiffening element is securely fastened to the inflatable curtain.

Claim 30 (original) The inflatable curtain of claim 29, wherein the stiffening element is a plastic stay.

Claim 31 (original) The inflatable curtain of claim 29, wherein the first stiffening element is stitched to the peripheral region.

Claim 32 (original) The inflatable curtain of claim 26, wherein the inflatable curtain is tetherless.

(Claim 33) (original) The inflatable curtain of claim 26, further comprising a tether.